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EDWARD N. BONNER
SHERIFF-CORONER-MARSHAL

DEVON BELL
UNDERSHERIFF

PRESS RELEASE

Date/Time of Release: Tuesday, May 13, 2008 3 p.m.
Date/Time of Occurrence: Tuesday, May 13, 2008 2 p.m.
Nature of Event: Kayaker Found Unharmmed
Location of Call: Iowa Hill
Released by: Dena Erwin, PIO (530) 889-6901

SHERIFF EDWARD N. BONNER RELEASES THE FOLLOWING:

A Colorado kayaker was brought to safety this afternoon after spending two nights on the American River.

Brian Kelly, 25, went kayaking with two others Sunday, when they attempted to navigate the north fork's dangerous Class IV and V rapids past Euchre Bar. Kelly's friends last saw his kayak going downriver without him around noon. The friends attempted to get back upriver to find him, but were unable to do so because of the extremely rugged terrain.

They contacted the Placer County Sheriff's Department at 10 p.m. Sunday and a search began Monday morning. Sheriff's swift-water and whitewater experts searched the area from Falcon 30, the department's helicopter, but determined that the raging waters were too dangerous to enter. The air search continued throughout the day, but Kelly was never located.

Late Monday, a group of local rafting and kayaking experts devised a plan and sent two kayakers and two rafts into the river. They found Kelly sitting at the river's edge, safe and unharmed. The rafters stayed with Kelly throughout Monday night and then rafted him to safety Tuesday, arriving at the Iowa Hill Bridge at 2 p.m.

Kelly's parents, who flew in from Colorado Monday, were at the bridge when he arrived this afternoon. Kelly did not require medical treatment.

Sheriff's Search and Rescue coordinator, Lt. Rich Tornberg, said several groups are credited with rescuing Kelly. They are Wilderness Adventures in Coloma, American Whitewater, a national organization dedicated to improving whitewater access and safety, and Rescue Three, a whitewater safety training and certification group.